



HOMEOWNER MANAGEMENT OF GYPSY MOTH

GYPSY MOTH: WHAT IS IT?

Gypsy moth is a destructive invasive pest whose rampage across the United States started more than a century ago. The insect is established throughout the Northeast and Midwest, however, because of cyclical biological patterns, gypsy moth outbreaks fluctuate year by year. Gypsy moth feed on more than 250 known host plants but prefer oak.

Gypsy moth have an annual life cycle. Their egg masses can be found from late August until early April. The insects emerge as larvae in early May and grow into foliage eating caterpillars between May-June. The caterpillar feeds on a wide variety of trees and shrubs. During extended outbreaks, trees are weakened and left susceptible to disease, pests, and even death.

By July, they form cocoons and emerge as adult moths in 10-14 days. Adults do not feed on leaves, dying shortly after they lay eggs.



Gypsy Moth caterpillars

SIGNS OF INFESTATION & MANAGEMENT TACTICS

The residents of Grand Rapids are the City's greatest allies in our efforts to reduce the gypsy moth population. A number of tactics can be implemented to reduce tree injury and to contain outbreaks. These include:

- Locating and destroying egg masses
- Hiring a certified arborist to administer treatments
- Using burlap or cloth hiding flaps and duct tape
- Promoting tree health and vigor

October - Late April

Egg masses appear as a light brown, velvety mass, about 1 1/2 inches long and 1/2 of an inch wide and irregular in shape, being wider at one end than the other. Eggs are laid against hard objects like tree trunks, branches, buildings and objects around the house, not on leaves or fine twigs. Residents should locate and destroy as many egg masses as possible. Scrap off egg masses with a dull knife and place them into a cup of soapy water. Wait a few hours before discarding.



Gypsy Moth egg masses

Late April - Late May

Wrap a double band of duct-tape around trees, the outer layer being sticky side out, which will prevent young caterpillars from moving up a tree.

Late May - Early June

Consult an arborist and consider having your vulnerable trees sprayed by a licensed pesticide applicator. The objective is to protect trees from severe to moderate defoliation by caterpillars. Treatment should take place when eggs hatch and young caterpillars begin to feed on leaves.

June to September

Trap and destroy remaining caterpillars by placing burlap or cloth flaps on trees. Wrap material around the tree, tie it in the middle with a rope and fold it. Caterpillars feed at night and find shelter during the day. They will congregate underneath the material. Place caterpillars in soapy water during the day, before they head to the canopy to feed. Water trees during dry spells.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information and regular updates please visit our website at www.grandrapidsmi.gov or call the City's 311 Center at 616-456-3000.